

Exhibit No. 15
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Bill No. SB 343

Senate Bill 343
Friday, March 4, 2011
Presented by Bruce Rich
Senate Finance and Claims Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Bruce Rich, Chief of Fisheries for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide support on Senate Bill 343.

FWP supports the revisions made to the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Act. The Act provides the necessary authority for FWP to manage AIS. FWP and Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) have worked closely on implementing the Act; during 2010 the two departments worked closely on developing a Cooperative Agreement outlining the department jurisdictional authorities for AIS. Both FWP and MDA are working cooperatively on implementing the Act. The one area within the Act where FWP has some concern is with 80-7-1005 (4) "The overall coordinating authority is the department of agriculture". Since the authorities of both departments have been clearly identified within the Cooperative Agreement, eliminating the language in 80-7-1005 (4) or providing clarification could reduce a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.

FWP does not anticipate any additional fiscal impact with the revisions made to the AIS Act; however, it is assumed that the agency will continue to be funded at a similar level as was received under authority of the AIS Act from general funds during the last biennium.